

MARKETING

57pc of consumers would agree to longer wait times for virtual lines: report

July 1, 2022



When given the choice between a physical and virtual line, about 69 percent of consumers said they would rather wait in a virtual one. Image credit: Melanie Pongratz

By KATIE TAMOLA

Even for affluents, waiting in line remains a reality most people must face.

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Although the world offers several wait-time avoidance strategies, sometimes all consumers simply must wait in line, whether they are shopping at their favorite stores or waiting to board first class. It is crucial for luxury brands and retailers to understand the toll that waiting takes on consumers, as a new [study](#) from queue management platform Waitwhile finds that more than 70 percent of consumers will abandon a line before their turn.

"Our research shows that a staggering 74 percent of people will abandon a physical line before it's their turn, and that consumers who are subjected to wait for a product or service most frequently report feeling apathetic, bored and annoyed," said Christoffer Klemming, CEO and cofounder of [Waitwhile](#), in a statement.

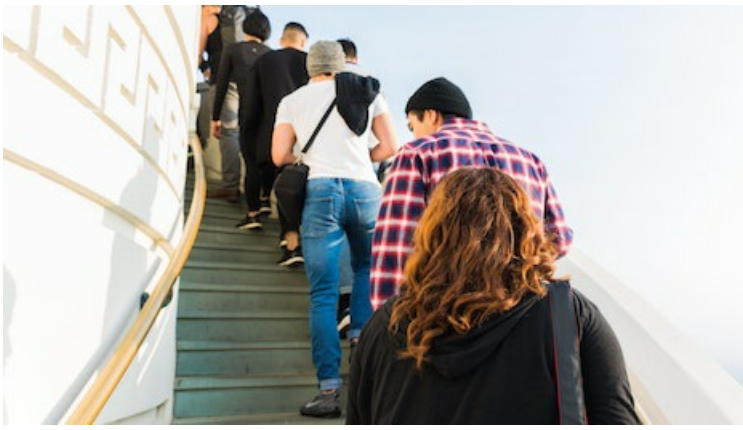
"The good news for brands is that waiting in line doesn't need to be a burden for customers and negatively impact business," he said. "Using virtual queues that give guests the freedom to move, relax or shop while waiting, organizations can significantly improve the customer experience while simultaneously increasing sales and saving their staff precious time."

Waitwhile surveyed 1202 consumers over the age of 18 in April 2022 in the United States.

Waiting, wishing, leaving

As brands and retailers contemplate tactics to implement in mitigating consumer frustration with wait times, they can begin by first understanding how waiting affects a customer's temperament.

While about 27 percent of consumers said they do not mind waiting in line, 23 percent said it made them feel bored, 20 percent said they felt annoyed and 13 percent said they felt frustrated.



If physical lines are the only option, about 48 percent of consumers said wait time updates would be beneficial. Image credit: Levi Jones

Waiting in line remains most common in retail stores, restaurants, pharmacies and in health care settings.

When asked where they last waited in line, 80 percent of respondents said on the premises, 14 percent said elsewhere and 5 percent said they do not remember.

With so many people willing to abandon lines, brands and retailers can implement a helpful tool to avoid loss of business: virtual lines.

When given the choice between a physical and virtual line, about 69 percent of consumers said they would rather wait in a virtual one. Additionally, 45 percent of respondents said they are more likely to join a line if it is a virtual one.

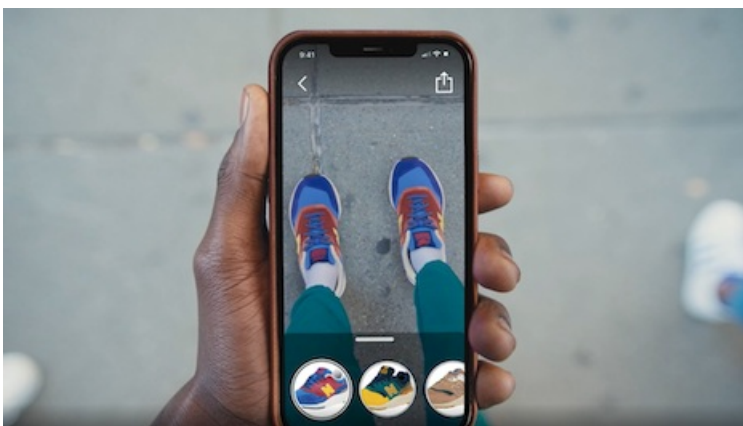
Fifty-seven percent of respondents also said they would be willing to wait longer times if they were in a virtual line, with about 39 percent saying they would be willing to wait 15 to 30 minutes longer.

When virtual lines are not possible, brands and retailers can implement certain updates that consumers find can improve the process. About 48 percent of consumers say wait time updates would be beneficial, about 47 percent say online check-in and 44 percent say complete forms/pay would be fruitful.

Tapping technology

Virtual possibilities lately seem endless and implementing entities like virtual lines and try-ons continues to attract customers.

Ecommerce giant Amazon is expanding its augmented reality tools to help shoppers visualize thousands of sneaker styles.



The virtual try-on for shoes helps shoppers visualize style, not fit or comfort. Image credit: Amazon

Amazon Fashion has launched "Virtual Try-On for Shoes," now available on the platform's iOS app for users in the U.S. and Canada. The VR feature is the latest interactive experience from the influential company ([see story](#)).

Ecommerce platform Saks has redesigned its personal stylist and shopping service to offer high-touch styling to online consumers.

Saks Stylist is a complimentary service now available to all Saks Fifth Avenue shoppers on the retailer's ecommerce site and mobile app. The service matches shoppers with professional stylists, shaping consumers' relationship with Saks while the retailer can glean more insights from customer behavior ([see story](#)).

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